

The Open Mike^{District 2}

A Newsletter From Councilman **Mike Knapp**

Volume 1, Number 3

June 2005

A Moment at the Mike:

Summertime ... And The Council Is Busy...

...and so are you. Gershwin may have believed the living was easy in summertime -- and certainly students across the county and the state are presently enjoying their summer vacation -- but if you're a grown up, you were likely forced to give up on the idea of a summer break a long time ago. While I hope you and your family can take the time to enjoy a few days or weeks of well-earned summer vacation I know that, for the most part, you're working.



Mike Knapp

The County Council is at work, too -- and I want to take a moment to give you an idea of some of what's coming up in the council over the next few weeks in the event you want to take time out from work -- or from some well-deserved play -- to let me know of your comments, concerns, or views.

The Private Institutional Facilities Work Group is due to report its findings and recommendations at a joint meeting of the Council's Planning Housing and Economic Development (PHED) and Transportation and Environment (T&E) committees on Thursday, June 30, at 2:00 p.m. in the Council's 7th floor hearing room. This work group was appointed by the Council to take a comprehensive look at policies governing the location of private institutions in the county, and the implication for provision of infrastructure (water and sewer), as well as other quality of life factors.

On Tuesday, July 5, the Council is scheduled to take action on Bill 8-05, regarding a new **Posting of Notice Issuance for Building Permits**. This bill would require the recipient of a building permit for certain structures in residential or agricultural zones to post a sign describing the proposed construction and the deadline for filing an administrative appeal. Under current law, property owners are permitted to erect certain accessory structures -- such as antennas -- on their property by obtaining a permit, but there is no requirement that any notice of the permit or of the availability of appeal rights be posted. As a result, property owners are not always aware that structures will be constructed on neighboring property, and that they may have the right to appeal the permit.

Also on July 5, the Public Safety Committee will discuss the Montgomery County **Fire and Rescue Service Apparatus Management Plan**, as well as **Fire and Rescue Service in Clarksburg**. As the committee's lead member for Fire and Rescue Services, I welcome any comments you might have, so feel free to call or [e-mail me](#), send me your comments, or attend the meeting in person.

The Health and Human Services Committee will continue its work on a measure to **protect citizens from predatory lending practices** in the county during its meeting on Wednesday, July 6, at 9:00 a.m. The full Council should take up the recommendations of bill 36-04, the *Commission on Human Rights* --

Discrimination in Housing – Amendments, later in July.

With the ink on the FY2006 Operating Budget still fresh, the Management and Fiscal Policy Committee will begin looking ahead with a **discussion of the FY2007 budget process** on Monday, July 11 at 2:00 p.m. in the Council's 7th floor hearing room. Incidentally, the complete FY2006 county budget will be available electronically on July 1. Look for it then -- and I'll be sure to include a link to the full budget in the July issue of *The Open Mike*.

Keep watching the County Council's website for updates on council activities and issues that we'll be considering in the weeks and months ahead. If you'd like, you can receive council agendas as soon as they're available by signing up [here](#) for an electronic subscription. And if you're already a subscriber to this newsletter, you can add council agendas to your list of subscriptions by [clicking here](#).

I hope you're taking advantage of the long daylight hours and warm weather to enjoy all that our county, communities, and state have to offer. And if you spot anything amiss while you're outside -- a downed tree, a streetlight that's out, or a pothole that needs repairing -- call or [e-mail me](#) and let me know. Working together, we can all ensure that Montgomery County remains a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Mike

Council Increases Funding for Upcounty Police Service

Budget Provides for Additional Staff, New Police Station in Sixth District

I'm pleased to report that, as part of the FY2006 county budget, the County Council included additional resources for the [Montgomery County Police Department](#) (MCPD). This funding will be put to good use as the MCPD works to continue to meet the growing needs of the Upcounty. Thankfully, the Upcounty remains a safe place to live, work, and play -- but maintaining this level of safety requires continued diligence and resources. For this reason, I worked hard to ensure that the police received the funding and support they require to continue doing the job well.

As part of the FY 2006 budget, the Council approved language that will allow the county to move forward with construction of a new and expanded Sixth District police station. The current facility, located on Route 355, was always intended to serve only as a temporary site and was never designed to house the expanded capabilities and resources employed by the Sixth District. While a new site has not yet been selected for the new police station, the county will have the authority to quickly issue bids for the planning, design, and construction of the facility once the new site is chosen later this summer.



The Council also approved funding for additional personnel to increase staffing for specialized teams -- such as Special Assignment Teams -- within the Sixth District. Locating these teams at the new facility will not only benefit Gaithersburg, Montgomery Village, and the surrounding neighborhoods of the Sixth District, but also the entire Upcounty, as the Fifth

and Sixth Police Districts will no longer need to share personnel for some functions.

It is important that we remain vigilant in our efforts to maintain the quality of life we have in our communities across the county. As your Councilmember -- and as a member of the Council's Public Safety Committee -- you can be certain that I will continue to vigorously support our police, fire, and other first responders who serve us all so very well.

Knapp Takes Walking Tour of Cinnamon Woods Community

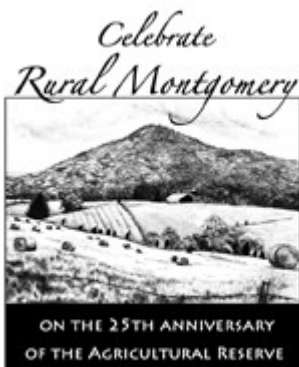
In June, I had the pleasure of taking a walking tour of the Cinnamon Woods Community with Fifth District Police Commander Evelyn Cahalen and members of the police citizen's advisory committee. This was an important opportunity to talk with residents and to get an up-close, honest assessment of their views of the community in which they live. Most residents told me they generally felt good about their community and the direction in which it was moving. But they also all agreed that safety is something about which we need to continue to be diligent and proactive.

I commend the police for their continued efforts and success in making Cinnamon Woods a safer place to live and work -- and I'll take another walking tour of the neighborhood later this summer to see how things are going. By working together and bringing the resources of the County directly to residents, we can all make a difference in our communities.

Knapp Promotes Ag Reserve Policies At State Summit

On June 15, I attended a Maryland Department of Agriculture summit on the status of the agriculture industry in our state, during which I spoke about Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve and related land use policies. Many other jurisdictions are struggling with viability and challenges of having agriculture and development existing side-by-side, and Montgomery County's Ag Reserve and associated policies continue to serve as an example of how to get it right. We can be very proud of the work we have put into preserving our agricultural resources while still ensuring we have room for the development needed for our growing economy.

While I'm at it, I'm pleased to include a shameless plug for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of Montgomery County's Ag Reserve, courtesy of the folks at *Celebrate Rural Montgomery*. Here goes:



Celebrate Rural Montgomery is very pleased to announce that a beautiful, full-color, 18" x 24" map of Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve is now available from Historic Medley for \$12. The map is an original work of art by Barnesville artist Tina Thieme Brown, featuring a decorative border that depicts peach and apple orchards, farm animals, historic sites, birds and wildflowers found within Montgomery County. The map was published by the Historic Medley District with support from Montgomery County's Department of Economic Development and the Historic Preservation Commission. We invite you to view the map on our website (www.ruralmontgomery.org/map.htm) and to contact Historic Medley District (historicmedley@aol.com) for information on ordering copies.

Check out Celebrate Rural Montgomery's web site for a comprehensive list of activities in the Agricultural Reserve!

The Upcounty Road Scholar

Got a road that needs repairing? A traffic light that's out? Is there a street or intersection that you think needs a stop sign or crosswalk? One of my responsibilities is to make sure someone knows about it -- and to do what I can to get you information on your question or request as quickly as possible.

I stay in regular contact with the [Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation](#) (DPWT) and the [Maryland State Highway Administration](#) (MSHA), and provide each agency with a list of projects that need addressing in the Upcounty. Both agencies receive countless requests each week, and getting a response back can take some time. So bear with me -- if you don't see a particular project listed here, that doesn't necessarily mean it has been forgotten or neglected, but rather that I have not received an updated report on its progress.

With this in mind, the Road Scholar section of the newsletter provides an opportunity to give you the latest information received from DPWT, MSHA, and others on the progress of requests that have been submitted on your behalf. It's also an opportunity for you to [let me know](#) of other projects that may need to be undertaken in your community.

Public Works and Transportation Update

On June 13, I received a letter from DPWT updating me on the status of a number of requests that my office has submitted over the past few months. Here's what Arthur Holmes, Director of DPWT -- who has always done an excellent job keeping me up-to-date -- had to tell me about projects underway in the Upcounty:

Woodfield School Road at Hawkins Creamery (Damascus/Gaithersburg): After bringing the concerns of local drivers and residents to their attention, DPWT conducted a field review of this intersection and determined that the vertical curve of Hawkins Creamery Road present a sight distance problem for drivers turning from Woodfield School Road onto Hawkins Creamery. DPWT has placed in its traffic study queue an in-depth engineering study to determine actions that could enhance traffic study and operations at this intersection.

Century Boulevard at Town Commons Drive, Pinnacle Drive and Celebration Way (Germantown): By request, DPWT has addressed concerns regarding crosswalks and stops signs, parking signs, and street lights. I'll quote Mr. Holmes' letter to me verbatim to give you some idea of the complexity of this issue (and my thanks to the members of the community who brought their various concerns about safety in this area to my attention):

"Crosswalks and Stop Signs -- A traffic study was recently completed in which we evaluated all intersections along Century Boulevard from Middlebrook Road to Crystal Rock Drive. None of the intersections in this section warranted all-way stop controls.

"We concluded that the appropriate controls would be to designate Century Boulevard as a Through Street, thereby legalizing stop controls for all streets intersecting with Century (both public and private). Please note that stop controls exist for Century at its intersection with Pinnacle Drive,



Got a question on the roads, sidewalks, or construction in your area? [E-mail the Road Scholar](#) and let us know.

but these controls will be reversed so that Pinnacle Drive is stop controlled in the very near future. Although we did not review the need for crosswalks as part of that effort, we have since concluded that crosswalks should be installed on all legs at Century and Town Commons, and at Century and Pinnacle. These markings, which will be a decorative type material, will be installed once the developer completes the final pavement surface on Pinnacle Drive. We will review the private street intersections along Century Boulevard and determine the need for crosswalks at those locations.

"Parking Signs -- As part of the above referenced study, we did review the need for parking controls along Century Boulevard. The recommendations from that effort have been implemented. A subsequent field review confirmed that all curb bulb out areas (both mid-block and at intersections) along this section of Century Boulevard are currently signed as No Stopping Any Time. During our field review, we did note vehicles violating the posted restrictions at some of the bulb outs. To remedy this, we are asking Montgomery County Police to conduct selective enforcement of the No Stopping Controls along Century Boulevard, specifically between Middlebrook Road and Crystal Rock Drive. Also, by copy of this memorandum, we are requesting the Fire Marshall to review the need to designate fire lanes for the private street approaches to Century Boulevard in this section.

"Street Lights -- A nighttime field check was conducted in April and revealed 14 lights along Century Boulevard that were not functioning. These lights were reported to Allegheny Power, who responded that as of May 4, all the lights were repaired and functioning."

Speed Controls on Lindenwood Drive (Olney): DPWT presently has a traffic calming project for Lindenwood Drive in its queue of studies. DPWT expects to begin data collection and analysis this month, and intends to have the project completed by the end of 2005.

Traffic Controls at Intersection of Buehler and Spartan Roads (Olney): While previous studies (in July 2003 and December 2004) concluded that additional traffic controls were not warranted for this intersection, DPWT acknowledged that neither study had taken into account the impact of traffic queued from MD 108 along Spartan Road and the effect on intersection operations at Buehler. Therefore, DPWT will conduct a review of the section of Spartan Road between Buehler and MD 108 to determine if any remedies are possible to "mitigate the effect of the traffic queue along Spartan Road."

Partnership Road and Sugarland Road (Poolesville): DPWT has just completed a study of this location, and will relocate the stop signs for both approaches of Sugarland Road to address sight issues. DPWT will also perform selective removal/trimming of foliage on the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the intersection, with work being completed by this summer.

Bikepath Adjacent to Kingsview Village (MD 118 to South Germantown Park Drive): This bikepath will be constructed as part of the project to build the new West Germantown Fire Station. That project is scheduled to start construction in June 2006 and is expected to be completed in late 2007.

State Highways Administration Update

I received an update on May 31 on a number of requests that have been submitted to MSHA regarding traffic abatement and pedestrian/bicycle safety. Here's what MSHA District 2 Engineer Charlie Watkins reported to me regarding these requests:

MD 28 (Darnestown Road) at Turkey Foot Road: Based on concerns expressed by the Darnestown Civic Association, myself, and others, SHA conducted feasibility study at the intersection of MD 28 and Turkey Foot Road, and determined that the existing traffic volumes did not justify a traffic roundabout. According to SHA, "the accident history did not reveal a pattern correctable by a roundabout. Moreover, the study found that construction of a roundabout would severely impact the adjacent

properties."

MSHA also conducted a signal warrant study at the same intersection and advised against installation of a traffic signal, as none of the signal warrants were met. MSHA is, however, upgrading the existing intersection warning signs to florescent yellow to improve motorist awareness.

MD 27 (Ridge Road) at Oak Drive: Based on a request from Senator Kramer, MSHA performed a signal warrant study at this intersection and, using the nationally accepted guidelines provided by the Federal Highway Administration's ["Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices"](#) (MOUTCD), determined that the intersection did not meet the criteria established by MOUTCD for installation of a traffic signal. I have asked in subsequent correspondence with MSHA that it continue to monitor traffic at this intersection.

MD 118 (Germantown Road) at Richter Farm Road: A signal modification to include a pedestrian signal and crosswalk on the north leg of this intersection was completed in February, and MSHA re-installed crosswalks on the south leg (across MD 118) and east leg (across Richter Farm) in April. Based on citizen concerns, MSHA studied placement of signage for the South Germantown Recreational Park and determined that the signs were too close to the intersection. The signs have since been relocated based on sight distance criteria. Also, signals along the MD 119 (Great Seneca Highway) at Queenstown Lane and Richter Farm are being upgraded to pedestrian countdown signals.

MD 112 (Seneca Road) at Esworthy Road: MSHA has not performed a safety study for this intersection in the past three years, but did conduct a speed study in August 2004 to evaluate speed limits along MD 112 between Esworthy Road and MD 28. This study determined that prevailing speeds were within acceptable limits of the posted speed limit, and that signage along MD 112 was adequate.

MSHA is presently in the process of signing MD 112 as a class III bike facility, which is generally located along roadways with shoulders no wider than 3 feet. Because the shoulders along MD112 are virtually non-existent, MSHA will be installing 'Share the Road' signs. MSHA expects the bike route signage to be complete by the end of summer.

MD 115 (Muncaster Mill Road) Temporarily Closed For Ten Weeks

MSHA has announced that it will temporarily close MD 115 (Muncaster Mill Road) to through traffic between Sweetbirch Drive and MD 28 (Norbeck Road) for approximately ten weeks, beginning Thursday, June 16, to make drainage and safety improvements. MSHA anticipates this project will be completed by fall.



As part of this project, MSHA is rebuilding Muncaster Mill Road crossing over Manor Run, north of MD 28, because of flooding. Vehicles on Muncaster Mill Road will be directed to detour routes. **Residents along Muncaster Mill Road will have complete access to their homes through the duration of the closure.**

The **primary detour**, for motorists traveling between Gaithersburg and Rockville, will be along MD 28 to East Gude Drive to Crabbs Branch Way to Shady Grove Road to Muncaster Mill. The **local detour** will move traffic from Muncaster Mill to Emory Lane to southbound MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) to westbound MD 28, then back to Muncaster Mill Road. Please keep these detours in mind when moving about the county over the next ten weeks.

Pepco Passes Along Tips For Keeping Cooling Costs Down

[Pepco](#) has asked that county officials pass along to our constituents the following tips for keeping down cooling costs this summer. I'm happy to oblige (and for a copy of Pepco's original press release, please [click here](#)). These tips will be of value to anyone who uses electricity to cool their residence, regardless of service provider. My thanks to the folks at Pepco for making these tips available.

Energy Conservation Reminder From Pepco

Heat Pushes Electricity Use Higher

Pepco expects customers' demand for electricity to be higher than normal ... as a result of the extremely hot weather.

While the company expects to be able to deliver enough electricity to meet the heavy demand for power, Pepco is asking electric customers in its service territory to use energy prudently to help prevent possible power supply problems.

Pepco offers the following conservation tips for electricity consumers:

- Close curtains and blinds to keep out the sun and retain cooler air inside;
- Postpone using major electric appliances such as stoves, dishwashers and clothes dryers until the cooler evening hours;
- If health permits, set your air conditioner thermostat higher than usual; and
- Turn off non-essential electrical appliances and equipment.

Pepco will continue to monitor conditions and request the public's assistance as necessary.

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And to learn a little more about me and the Upcounty, please click [here](#) for my homepage.

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